WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of forming a rough topology on a substrate using a planarized process comprising the steps of:

forming a contact opening having a lateral dimension exceeding a minimum contact size;

filling the contact opening with a first plug layer;

etching back the first plug layer to create a first cored region in the first plug layer, whereby the first cored region has a first depression; and

stacking a first subsequent process layer on the first cored region, whereby the first subsequent process layer has a second depression formed on top of the first depression.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

forming a first via opening on the contact opening;

filling the first via opening with a second plug layer;

etching back the second plug layer to create a second cored region in the second plug layer, wherein the second cored region has a third depression formed on top of the second depression; and

stacking a second subsequent process layer on the second cored region, wherein the second subsequent process layer has a fourth depression formed on top of the third depression.

3. The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of:

forming a second via opening on the first via opening and the contact opening;

filling the second via opening with a third plug layer; and

etching back the third plug layer to create a third cored region in the third plug layer, wherein the third cored region has a fifth depression formed on top of the fourth depression.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the contact opening is formed on a polysilicon layer.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the first depression has a different optical reflectivity compared to a relatively planar region of the substrate.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the second depression forms a rough, nonplanar topology to scatter incident radiation, resulting in a dissimilar optical reflectiveness from a smooth topology of the substrate.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

forming an insulating layer on the substrate and covering the first cored region; and

removing portions of the insulating layer covering the first cored region, thereby enhancing an optical contrast between the second depression and a planar region of the substrate.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the first subsequent process layer is a first metal layer.

9. The method of claim 2 wherein the second subsequent process layer is a second metal layer.

10. The method of claim 1 further wherein the lateral dimension is at least about 1:5 times larger than the minimum contact size.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein a shape of the contact opening is rectangular.

12. An alignment structure formed in a planarized semiconductor process comprising:

a substrate;

a contact opening formed on the substrate;

a first plug layer filling the contact opening, the first plug layer having a first depressed region in the contact opening, whereby a topological roughness formed by the first depressed region scatters incident radiation.

13. The alignment structure of claim 12 wherein the topological roughness contrasts reflectively to a topologically smooth region.

14. The alignment structure of claim 12 wherein the first depressed region is in about a middle of the contact opening.

15. The alignment structure of claim 12 further comprising:

a first via opening stacked on top of the contact opening, whereby the first via opening enhances the topological roughness formed by the first depressed region.

16. The alignment structure of claim 15 further comprising:

a second via opening stacked on top of the first via opening and second via opening, whereby the second via opening further enhances the topological roughness.

17. The alignment structure of claim 12 wherein the contact opening is larger than a minimum size specified by a design rule.

18. An alignment structure for semiconductor fabrication comprising:

a smooth region formed on a substrate;

a rough region formed on the substrate comprising:

a first conductive layer;

a second conductive layer formed above the first conductive layer,

an first insulating layer, between the first and second conductive layers, wherein the first insulating layer has a first opening for electrically coupling the first and second conductive layers;

a plug layer filling the first opening, wherein the first plug layer has a cored region, whereby a topological roughness formed by the cored region scatters incident radiation.

19. The alignment structure of claim 18 wherein the rough region further comprises:

a third conductive layer formed above the second conductive layer;

a second insulating layer, between the second and third conductive layers, wherein the second conductive layer has a second opening, stacked above the first opening, for electrically coupling the third and second conductive layers, whereby the second opening aggravates the topological roughness formed by the cored region.

20. The alignment structure of claim 18 wherein the cored region creates a void above the cored region and second conductive layer.

21. The alignment structure of claim 19 wherein the opening has a lateral dimension at least about 1.5 times larger than a minimum size.

22. The alignment structure of claim 19 wherein a passivation layer, covering the substrate, is removed from the rough region to enhance a reflectivity contrast between the rough region and smooth region.

23. The alignment structure of claim 19 wherein the smooth region is adjacent to the rough region.

24. The alignment structure of claim 19 wherein the smooth region is formed using a metal layer.